

Message Text

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SUBJECT:UNIVERSITY-TO-UNIVERSITY EXCHANGES

REF: MOSCOW 17892

1. DEPT WISHES TO ENCOURAGE DIRECT EXCHANGES BETWEEN US AND SOVIET UNIVERSITIES AND BELIEVES THAT MAXIMUM BENEFIT WILL ACCRUE IF ROLE OF MIDDLEMEN CAN BE MINIMIZED.

2. WE RECOGNIZE THAT, ON SOVIET SIDE, MHE APPROVAL WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ANY SUCH EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS, BUT WE WISH TO ENCOURAGE MINISTRY TO PERMIT INDIVIDUAL SOVIET UNIVERSITIES TO NEGOTIATE THEIR OWN AGREEMENTS. THIS CONNECTION, DURING RECENT US-USSR EXCHANGES AGREEMENT REVIEW TALKS WE MADE STRONG PITCH FOR DIRECT UNIVERSITY EXCHANGES NOTING THAT THIS IS TRADITION IN THE US AND THAT OUR UNIVERSITIES HAVE MANY SUCH EXCHANGES WITH UNIVERSITIES ABROAD, INCLUDING MANY WITH "SOCIALIST COUNTRIES." SOVIETS RESPONDED POSITIVE-LY BUT IN VERY GENERAL TERMS. THEY INDICATED DESIRE TO SEE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FROM US UNIVERSITIES AND NOTED THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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DETAILS WOULD HAVE TO BE "WORKED OUT."

3. ON US SIDE, IREX HOPES TO PLAY A COORDINATING ROLE IN UNIVERSITY-TO-UNIVERSITY EXCHANGES. WE ARE DISCOURAGING SUCH A ROLE FOR IREX OR ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THE DIRECT CONTACTS TO BE GAINED BY THE INDIVIDUAL US AND SOVIET UNIVERSITIES INVOLVED IN DIRECT EXCHANGES, WILL FAR OUTWEIGH ANY SHORT-TERM ADVANTAGES WHICH MAY RESULT FROM COORDINATION BY LONG-TIME EXPERTS IN US-SOVIET EXCHANGES. WE WISH TO MAXIMIZE POSSIBILITIES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN IT. ATTEMPTS BY EITHER MHE OR IREX TO ACT AS MIDDLEMEN CAN ONLY DILUTE THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF DIRECT EXCHANGES.

4. WHILE WE ARE DISCOURAGING IREX ROLE IN UNIVERSITY-TO-UNIVERSITY EXCHANGES, WE DO NOT WISH TO MINIMIZE CONTRIBUTION IREX HAS MADE AND IS MAKING TO SUCCESS OF CONVENTIONAL EXCHANGES UNDER THE AGREEMENT, EXCHANGES WHICH CONTINUE TO HAVE OUR FULL SUPPORT. DIRECT UNIVERSITY EXCHANGES SHOULD BE SEEN AS AN ADDITION TO, RATHER THAN SUBSTITUTE FOR, TRADITIONAL EXCHANGES.

5. RE RECTOR KHOKHLOV'S QUERY ON POSSIBLE DEPT/EMBASSY COORDINATING ROLE, WE ARE PREPARED TO ENCOURAGE EXCHANGES, TO INFORM INTERESTED US UNIVERSITIES OF WHAT OTHERS DOING, AND TO PROVIDE MODEST SEED GRANTS WHERE CU BUDGET PERMITS. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, WISH TO ASSUME OVERALL COORDINATING ROLE NOR ARE WE IN POSITION TO DO SO. WE WOULD HOPE THAT MGU WILL LEARN TO DEAL WITH US UNIVERSITIES ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS AS WELL AS THROUGH OFFICIAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. KISSINGER

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